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SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER THANOM ON THAI MILITARY NEEDS

AFTER U.S. DEPARTURE

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATION OF
EXCERPTS ON THAI MILITARY NEEDS AFTER THE U.S. MILITARY LEVES
THAILAND FROM PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTICHAKORN'S SEPTEMBER
19 PRESSCONFERENCE. THANOM STRESSED THAI SELF-RELIANCE
AND PARTICULARLY THE SETTING UP OF WEAPONS FACTORIES, REORGANI-
ZATION OF THE ARMY FOR DOUNTERINSURGENT OPERATIONS AND MAKING
USE OF BASES THAT THE U.S. VACATES. END SUMMARY.

1. THANOM: KHUN SOMBOON WORAPONG OF "THAI RATH" ASKS
ABOUT PLANS FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY AFTER THE WITH-
DRAWAL OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES IN COMPLETED, THE TURNING
OVER OF AIRBASES, AND HOW BIG A BUDGET WILL BE REQUIRED AND
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HOW LARGE A NUMBER OF TECHNICIANS.

TWO SEPARATE ANSWERS HAVE TO BE GIVEN. REGARDING REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. MILITARY FORCES, THE ARMY HAS REALIZED BEFOREHAND THAT THREE MAIN RESULTS WILL BE CAUSED BY THE WITHDRAWAL OF THOSE MILITARY FORCES. FIRST, IT WILL REDUCE PROTECTION BY AIR BY THE U.S. SECOND, ACTIVITIES OF COMMUNIST TERRORISTS IN THAILAND MIGHT BECOME INCREASED OR MORE VIOLENT. THIS CONCERNS ANOTHER QUESTION SENT IN ON THE SETTING UP OF A NEW GOVERNMENT IN LAOS, WHICH I WILL ANSWER AND MAKE A STATEMENT LATER ON REGARDING THE SITUATION IN A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY AND OUR VIEW THAT THERE WILL BE INCREASED INFILTRATION FROM OUTSIDE. THIRD, THERE WILL BE LESS HOPE TO BE ABLE TO DEPEND ON THE UNITED STATES, OR IN OTHER WORDS WE MUST BECOME SELF-RELIANT AND WE MUST ENDEAVOR TO BECOME AS SELF-DEPENDENT AS POSSIBLE. IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO COPE WITH REPERCUSSIONS CAUSED BY THESE THREE MAIN RESULTS, THE ARMY HAS REVISED ITS DEVELOPMENT PLANS TO MAKE IT MORE FLEXIBLE AND SUITABLE. IN ORDER TO REPLACE AIR PROTECTION PROVIDED BY THE UNITED STATES, THE ARMY WILL SPEED UP THE REORGANIZATION OF ITS AIR ARM. IT WILL ENDEAVOR TO INCREASE LONG-RANGE WEAPONS, SUCH AS CANNON, MISSILES, ETC., AND THE REORGANIZATION AND MODERNIZATION OF OUR ANTI-AIRCRAFT SYSTEM. WE ARE CONCENTRATING ON SETTING UP FACTORIES FOR PRODUCTION OF THESE WEAPONS, AS WELL AS BUYING THEM FROM ABROAD ALSO, AND OFFICIALS OF OUR ARMY ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT ARE TRYING TO DEVELOP WEAPONS WE NEED ALSO. THESE ARE MEASURES WE ARE TAKING TO REMEDY REPERCUSSIONS CAUSED BY FIRST RESULTS. IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THE DANGER OF INCREASED ACTIVITIES OF COMMUNIST TERRORISTS IN OUR COUNTRY, THE ARMY WILL ACCELERATE THE REORGANIZATION OF ITS TROOPS BY PROVIDING THEM WITH MODERN ARMAMENTS AND EQUIPMENT IN FULL STRENGTH AND IN READINESS TO FIGHT, ESPECIALLY IN THE FORM OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, MECHANIZED INFANTRY, SPECIAL TASK FORCES, SMALL SPECIAL TASK FORCES THAT POSSESS HIGH EFFICIENCY AND ARE CAPABLE OF OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY WITH NO NEED OF LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR 5-7 DAYS. IN MANEUVERS HELD JOINTLY EVERY YEAR, WE HAVE TESTED THE USE OF SMALL TASK FORCES OF THE STRENGTH OF PLATOONS OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY AND THEY ARE CAPABLE OF OPERATING IN A FULLY INDEPENDENT MANNER FOR 5-7 DAYS... THE POSSESSION OF SUFFICIENT BOMBS AND EXPLOSIVES NEEDED TO CARRY ON THIS NATIONAL DEFENSE PLAN

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SHOULD THE NECESSITY ARISE IS ANOTHER PROJECT. THESE ARE THE MAIN PLANS IN THE REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY WHICH HAVE BEEN OR ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED.

THIRD, IN REGARD TO SELF-RELIANCE AND SELF-DEPENDENCE, THE ARMY WILL SPEED UP SETTING UP AND DEVELOPING FACTORIES PRODUCING WEAPONS, MUNITIONS, AND OTHER FORMS OF EXPLOSIVES FOR OUR OWN USE. WE HAVE BOUGHT A FACTORY FROM THE H-K

COMPANY AS PART OF THIS PROJECT IN ORDER TO PRODUCE THEM OURSELVES AND NOT HAVE TO ASK FOR MUCH AID IN THIS FORM. THIS PROJECT WILL MAKE OUR ARMY INCREASINGLY SELF-DEPENDENT, RELYING ON OUR ALLIES TO THE MINIMUM, AND THUS LAYING DOWN A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR THE SECURITY OF OUR BELOVED COUNTRY. THIS IS THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST PART OF THE QUESTION.

IN ANSWER TO THE SECOND PART OF THE QUESTION, REGARDING THE TURNING OVER OF VARIOUS BASES, AS WELL AS BUDGET REQUIRED AND TECHNICIANS, SINCE ALL BASES THE UNITED STATES IS USING IN THAILAND BELONG TO OUR COUNTRY ALREADY, NOT TO AMERICA, ANYTHING CONSTRUCTED IN THOSE BASES BELONGS TO THAILAND. WHEN OUR ALLY WITHDRAWS FROM THEM, THAILAND CAN USE THEM FOR NATIONAL SECURITY TO THE UTMOST.

ONE OF THESE BASES THAT BELONGS TO THE ARMY IS IN NAKHON RATCHASIMA PROVINCE AND IT IS A CAMP CALLED FRIENDSHIP CAMP. THIS CAMP HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE ARMY ALREADY IN ORDER TO USE IT AS AN ARMY HOSPITAL, AND IT WILL PROVIDE MEDICAL SERVICES AND HOSPITALIZATION TO THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL ALSO. IT IS A HOSPITAL ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED BY THE UNITED STATES. IN ADDITION, THE ARMY IS SETTING UP SOME FACTORIES REQUIRED TO MAKE IT SELF-DEPENDENT, SUCH AS CAR REPAIR GARAGES, AND WE WILL REORGANIZE A REPAIR GARAGE ALREADY SET UP THERE ALSO. NEWLY-SET UP TASK FORCES WILL BE STATIONED THERE, WITH ALL EQUIPMENT, BECAUSE IT IS A VERY LARGE SITE. ONE UNIT HAS BEEN STATIONED THERE ALREADY BUT IT OPERATES OUTSIDE THAT SITE AND WE WILL USE IT FOR STORING OF WAR MATERIEL SUPPORTING FIGHTING ALSO.

OTHER BASES WHICH DO NOT CONCERN THE ARMY ARE THE VARIOUS AIR-BASES WE KNOW OF ALREADY, SUCH AS THE U-TAPAO AIRBASE. SOME OF THESE BASES ARE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF OUR AIR FORCE AND

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SOME ARE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF OUR NAVY. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS INSTRUCTED THE AIR FORCE AND THE NAVY TO DRAFT PLANS AND MAKE PREPARATIONS TO TAKE THEM OVER AND TO MAKE THE GREATEST USE OF THEM IN NATIONAL INTEREST.

WHEN ALL THESE BASES ARE TURNED OVER SOME EXPENDITURE WILL BE INCURRED NATURALLY, BUT WHEN A COMPARISON IS MADE OF THEIR USEFULNESS IT WILL BE SEEN HOW GREATLY BENEFICIAL THEY WILL BE. THIS IS BECAUSE AMERICA SPENT HUGE CAPITAL IN CONSTRUCTION WORK IN THESE BASES AND ALL THAT BELONGS TO US. THERE IS NO PROBLEM AT ALL REGARDING MILITARY TECHNICIANS BECAUSE OUR ARMED FORCES HAVE MADE PREPARATIONS IN FULL ALREADY FOR THE TIME WHEN THEY ARE TURNED OVER.

2. REPORTER: WHEN YOU SAID THAT THE ARMY WILL BE REORGANIZED AND

POSSESS MORE LONG-RANGE WEAPONS, YOU SAID THAT WE WILL SET UP FACTORIES FOR THEIR PRODUCTION AND THAT WE WILL BUY THEM FROM ABROAD ALSO. DOES THIS INCLUDE WEAPONS WE WILL ASK THE UNITED STATES FOR AS A FORM OF AID ALSO?

THANOM: THOUGH WE WE ARE ASKING FOR THIS FROM OF AID ALSO, WE ARE CONCENTRATING ON PROVIDING THEM OURSELVES TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE. HOW CAN WE CONTINUE ASKING IT FOR AID WITHOUT END?

3. REPORTER: IS THE NEW TASK FORCE WE WILL SET UP TO THE STRENGTH OF A DIVISION?

THANOM: WE HAVE A PLAN ALREADY. WE DRAFT POLICY PLANS ON NATIONAL SECURITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, IN WHICH THE EXTENT OF STRENGTH FOR EACH YEAR IS SPECIFIED. WE HAVE TO CARRY OUT THE PLAN DRAFTED STEP BY STEP.

4. REPORTER: IN REGARD TO WEAPONS, SUCH AS HEAVY CANNON AND MISSILES, IS IT OUR PLANS TO ASK FOR THEM AS A FORM OF AID OR WILL WE BUY THEM?

THANOM: WE WILL ASK FOR THEM AS A FORM OF AID AT THIS STAGE, BUT WE WILL ENDEAVOR TO PRODUCE THEM OURSELVES LATER.

5. REPORTER: WHERE DID WE BUY THIS FACTORY FOR THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PRODUCTION OF WEAPONS?

THANOM: FROM H-K IN GERMANY. IT IS A WEAPONS ASSEMBLY PLANT, BUT IT IS FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF SMALL WEAPONS, SUCH AS SUBMACHINEGUNS, MACHINEGUNS, REVOLVERS, RIFLES, ETC.

6. REPORTER: WHAT DO WE PLAN TO DO AT THIS STAGE?

THANOM: WE WILL BUY GUNS FROM IT AT THIS STAGE. THIS COMPANY HAS COME AND IS STARTING CONSTRUCTION OF THE ASSEMBLY PLANT. IT WILL INSTALL EQUIPMENT WHICH WE HAVE BOUGHT ALSO. OUR NAVY HAS BOUGHT SEVERAL NAVY SHIPS ITSELF ALREADY, AND OUR AIR FORCE WILL BUY PLANES ITSELF. WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO MAKE OUR COUNTRY AS SELF-DEPENDENT AS POSSIBLE. MASTERS

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